

SCHUITEN & PEETERS
CITIES OF THE FANTASTIC

THE INVISIBLE FRONTIER

VOLUME I



SCHREIBER & LESER

THE INVISIBLE

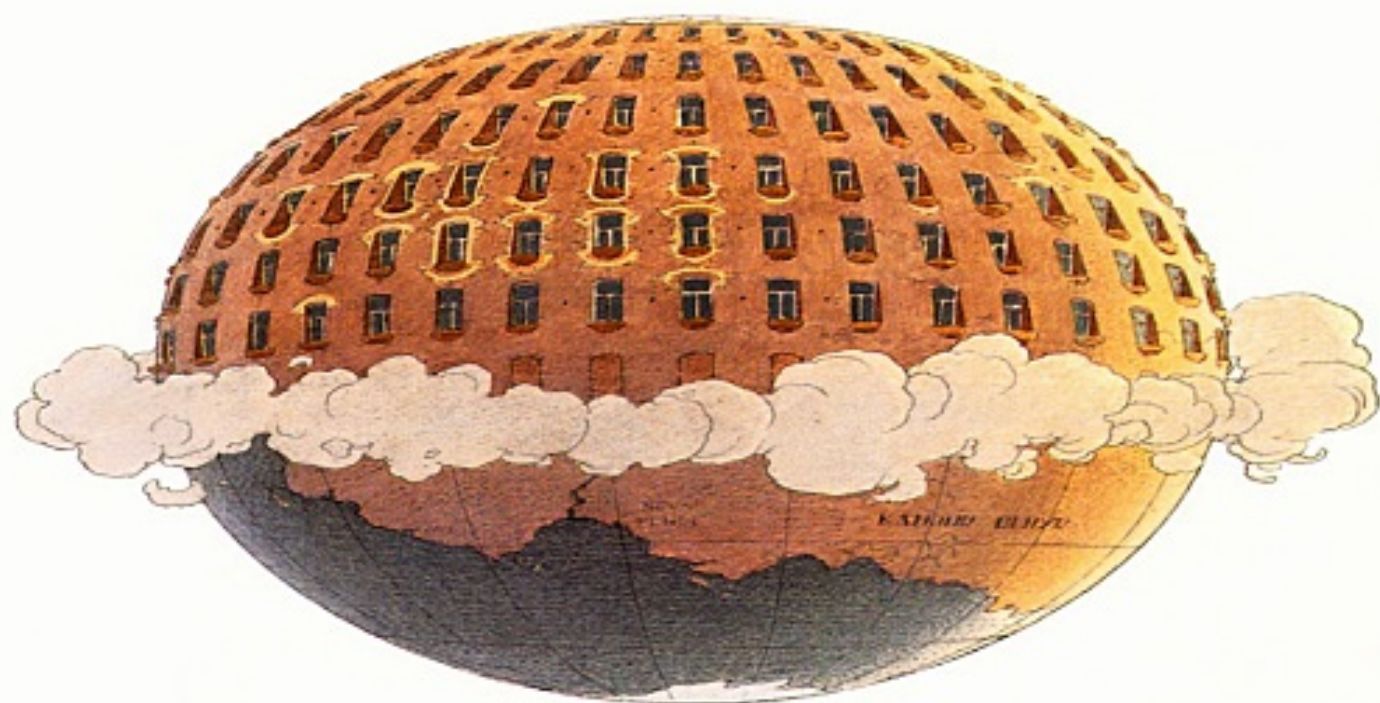
FRONTIER

VOLUME I

CITIES OF THE FANTASTIC

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SCHREIBER & LESER





30TH JUNE 761 A FINE START FOR A
CARTOGRAPHER



WELL... CARTOGRAPHER MIGHT BE GOING TOO FAR. I
HAVEN'T EVEN PASSED MY EXAMS YET.



AND FIRST THING, I WENT THE WRONG WAY.
THANKFULLY NO-ONE SAW.



SUCH A JOURNEY DRAGS ON, WITH THE HEAT AND
THE NEGLECTED PATHS.



MY OLD PROFESSOR MARTINUS WAS RIGHT. YOU CAN
FEEL SOMONITA'S DESERT CLIMATE EVEN HERE.



IN THOSE ENDLESS HOURS I PICTURED THE GREAT
DOME OF THE CARTOGRAPHIC CENTRE. TWO, THREE
TIMES I EVEN THOUGHT I SAW IT.



TO TOP IT ALL OFF, A WIND GOT UP... A SCORCHING,
DUST-LADEN WIND...



HEY...?



UNBELIEVABLE! WHAT FOOL WOULD THROW
AWAY SUCH A PRECIOUS MAP.



IT MUST BE FROM THE TIME
OF ORTELIUS, MIGHT EVEN BE
ONE OF HIS...





ALL AT ONCE I FELT I WAS ALMOST THERE. I BEGAN TO WALK FASTER.



BUT MY EUPHORIA DIDN'T LAST. A PENETRATING STENCH ALMOST KNOCKED THE WIND OUT OF ME. IT SEEMED TO CLING TO MY ENTIRE BODY.



I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND HOW THE GOVERNMENT COULD HAVE LET THE CENTRE'S SURROUNDINGS FALL INTO RUIN LIKE THIS.



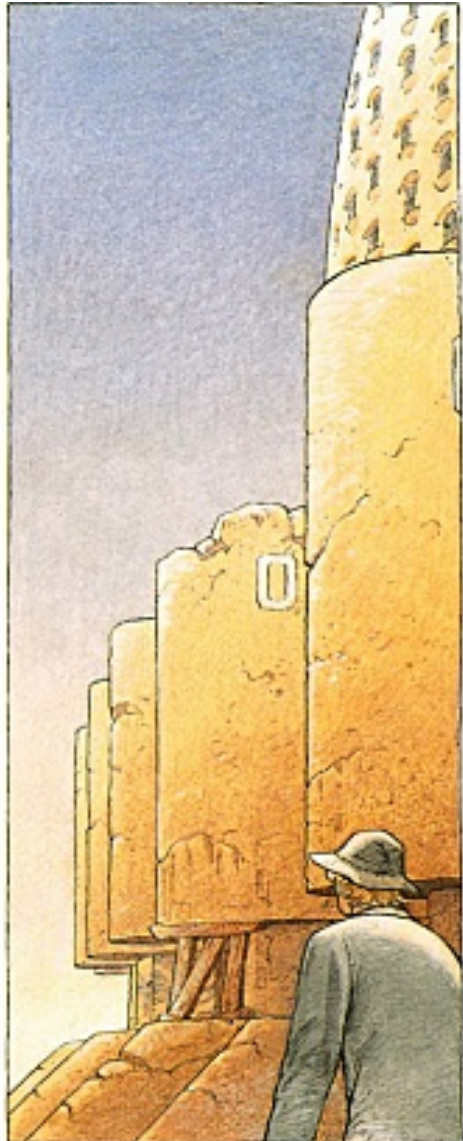
IF I THOUGHT MY SUFFERING WAS AT AN END, I WAS WRONG.



I JUST COULDN'T UNDERSTAND THE DIRECTIONS. THEY WEREN'T VERY CLEAR AT ALL.



I FELT LIKE THEY WERE ALL WATCHING ME FROM UP THERE, AS I WANDERED AIMLESSLY AROUND THE DOME.



FINALLY I FOUND THE RIGHT GATE.



THE NEW CARTOGRAPHER!? HAH! WHATEVER NEXT? SO, THEY'RE TAKING CHILDREN NOW?

BUT IT'S TRUE. I HAVE AN OFFICIAL
CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT...

THEN SHOW ME.

WHERE DID MAMA PUT IT?
I ASKED HER TO BE CAREFUL.

A BIG BOY LIKE YOU
SHOULD BE ABLE TO
PACK HIS OWN
SUITCASE.

ROLAND DE CREMER... ARE YOU
RELATED TO THE GREAT DE CREMER?

ER... YES... HE WAS
MY GREAT UNCLE...

AH, THERE IT IS!
HERE...

BUT I DIDN'T KNOW HIM.
HE DIED LONG BEFORE I WAS BORN.

PLEASE EXCUSE MY HARSH
WORDS. I WASN'T TOLD.

A NEW CARTOGRAPHER!
THAT'S NOT SOMETHING
THAT HAPPENS EVERY
DAY.

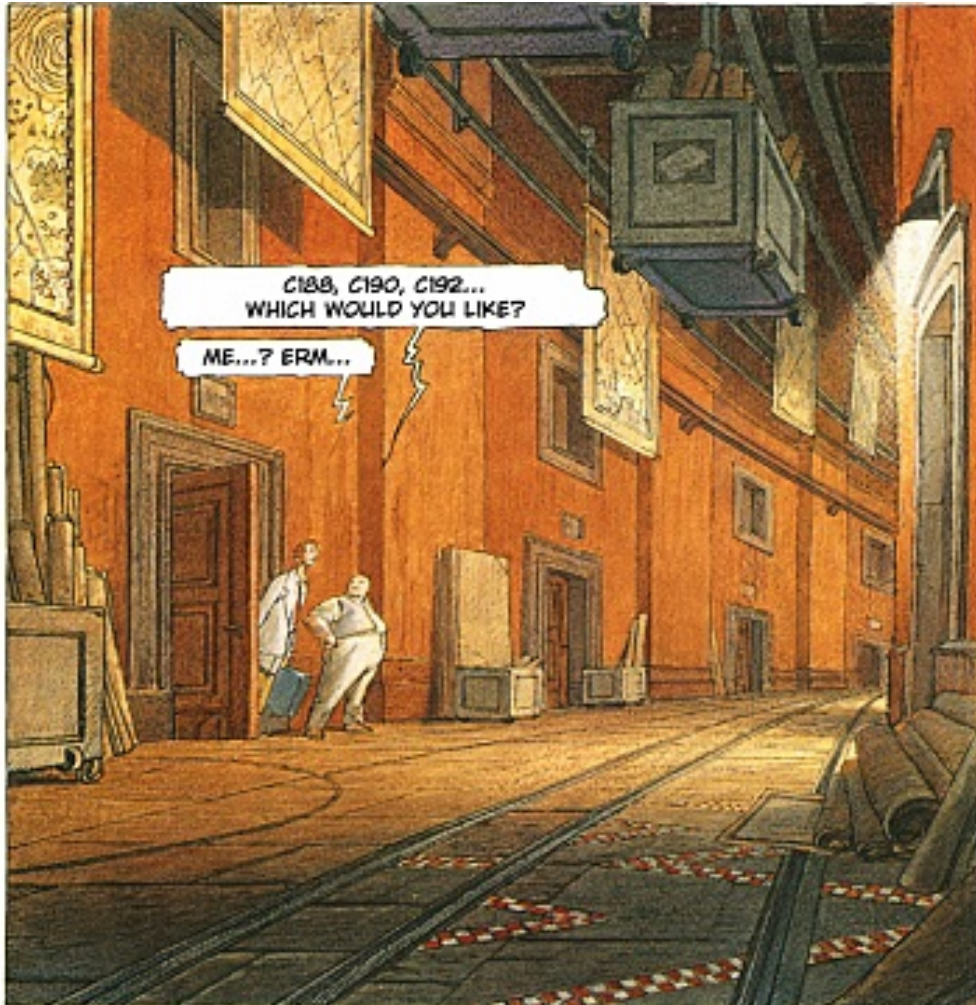
COME, I'LL SHOW YOU TO
YOUR APARTMENT.

I'M AFRAID I CAN'T HELP YOU WITH YOUR CASES.
I'VE ENOUGH TROUBLE WITH THE STAIRS.



C188, C190, C192...
WHICH WOULD YOU LIKE?

ME...? ERM...



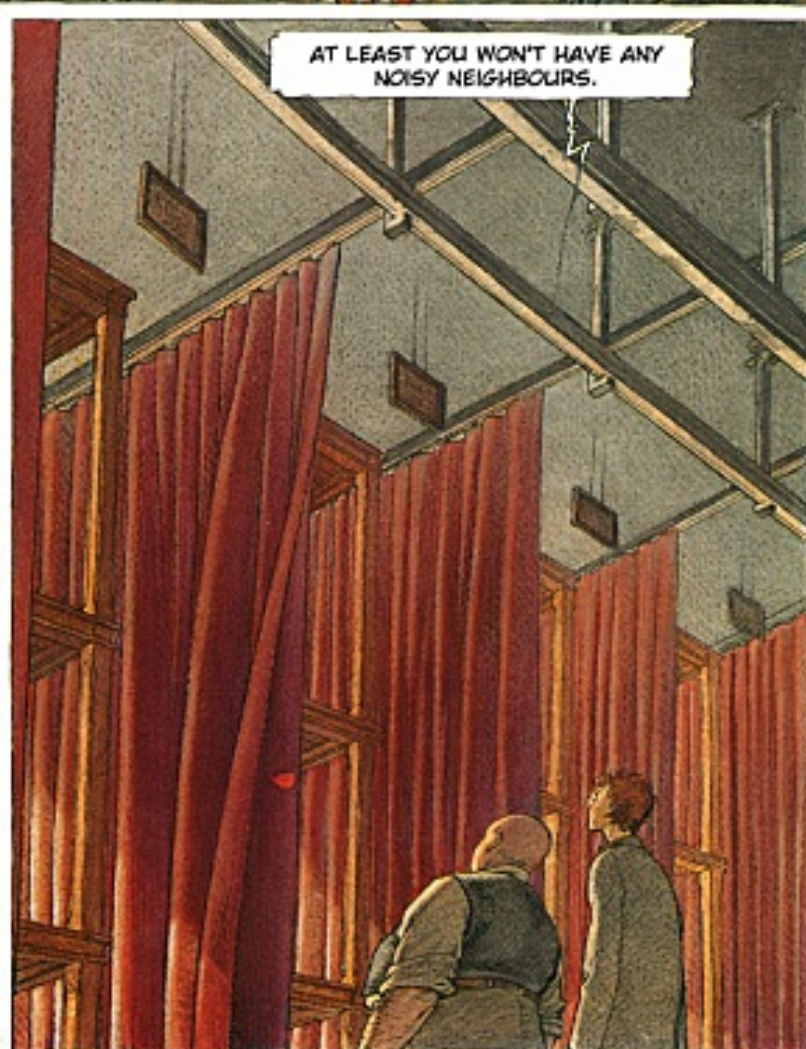
THERE'S PLENTY OF ROOM
ON THIS FLOOR. WE'VE
HAD SEVERAL DEATHS
RECENTLY...



AND NEW ARRIVALS ARE RARE.



AT LEAST YOU WON'T HAVE ANY
NOISY NEIGHBOURS.



KITCHEN, CUPBOARDS, BATHROOM... ALL TO HAND. IT'S A LITTLE CRAMPED, BUT THERE'S A WONDERFUL VIEW FROM THE THIRD FLOOR.



SO, DECIDE, WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIVE?



AH, YOU KNOW...

THE APARTMENTS ARE ALL THE SAME ANYWAY.



THE POOR BEAST! HE BELONGED TO MASTER WALTER...



HE'S BEEN SITTING THERE FOR THREE MONTHS... HE'S CALLED KALIN.

I'LL STAY HERE.



I'LL LEAVE MY CASES HERE AND YOU CAN SHOW ME MY OFFICE.



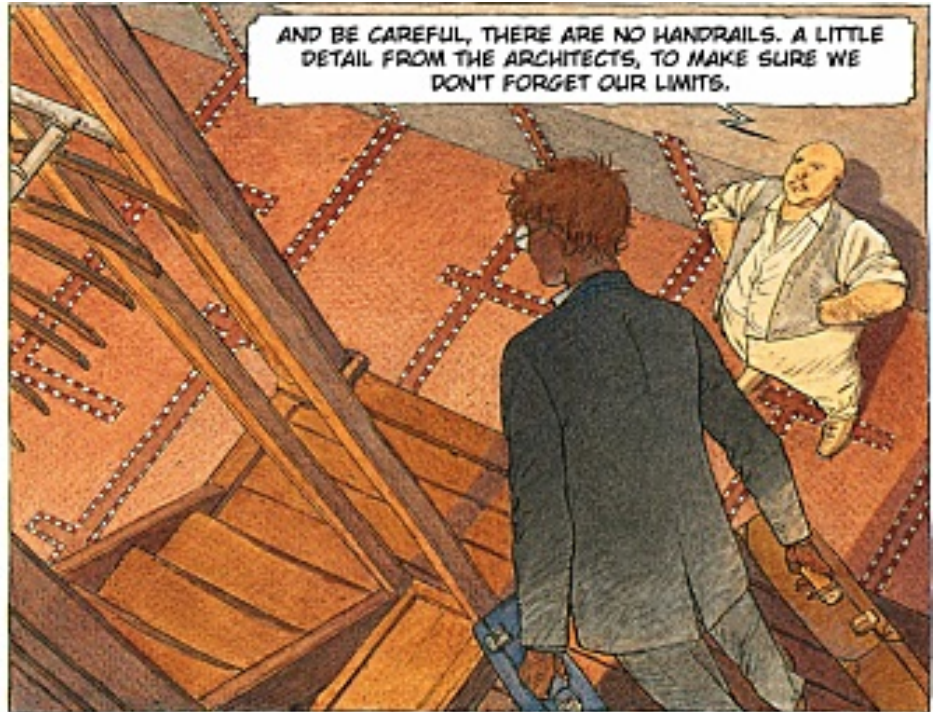
WHAT A THOUGHT! IT'S ALREADY FIVE, NO-ONE'S THERE.



I'LL GO THEN. I ALWAYS
HAVE TO BE AT MY POST.



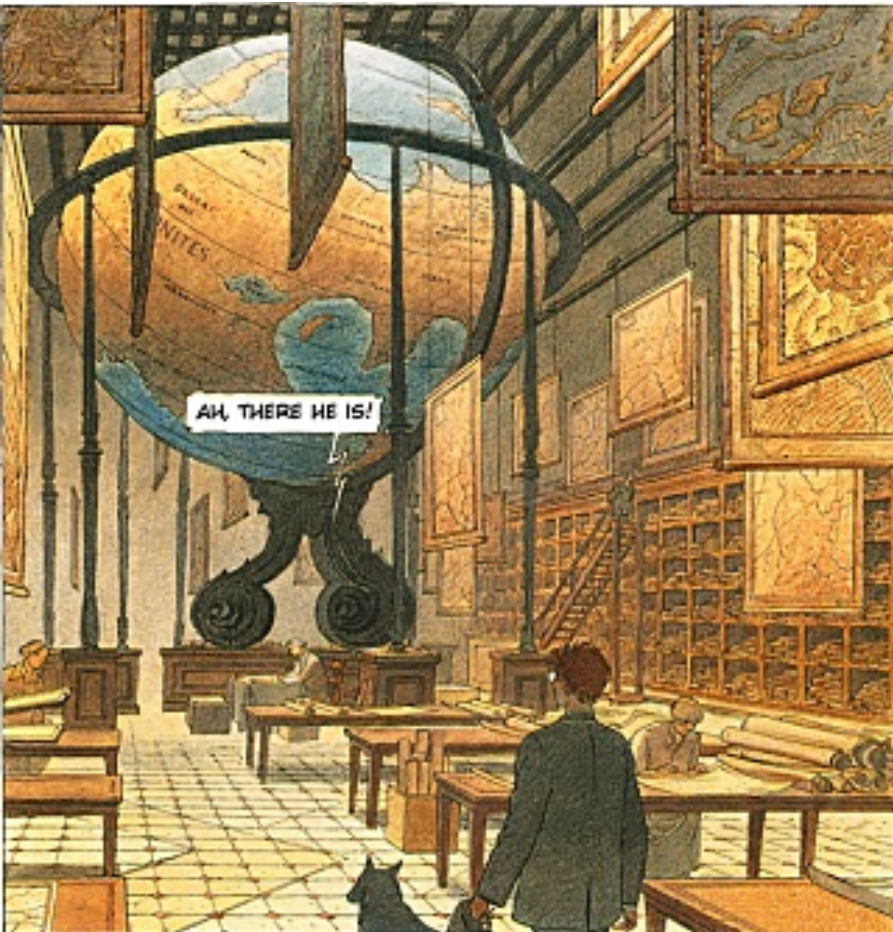
AND BE CAREFUL, THERE ARE NO HANDRAILS. A LITTLE
DETAIL FROM THE ARCHITECTS, TO MAKE SURE WE
DON'T FORGET OUR LIMITS.



YOU COULD CERTAINLY CALL THE APARTMENT CALM. THE WHOLE NIGHT I DIDN'T SEE A SOUL.



AND I WAS SO ANXIOUS TO MEET MY COLLEAGUES AND START MY NEW WORK!



AH, THERE HE IS!

1 JULY 761
THIS MORNING I MET MY SUPERIOR, PAUL CICERI.
THEY CALL HIM "MASTER PAUL".



WELL, WELL... A NEW GENERATION.
BUT I DIDN'T PICTURE HIM SO YOUNG.



ER...

KALIN'S ALREADY ADOPTED YOU I
SEE... HOPEFULLY YOU'LL BE MORE
USEFUL THAN HIS MASTER WAS.



I KNEW YOUR GREAT UNCLE BRIEFLY, A GREAT MAN...
I DON'T KNOW IF CARTOGRAPHY IS IN THE BLOOD, BUT...



I BROUGHT SOMETHING FOR YOU, I
FOUND IT OUT IN THE WILDERNESS.
IT LOOKS VALUABLE AND I
THOUGHT...

... AN OLD MAP... AS IF THERE WERE ANY
SHORTAGE OF THAT HERE!



SIT DOWN OVER THERE! AND SHOW
ME WHAT YOU CAN DO.



MISS BEAUJOT, BRING OUR NEW
ARRIVAL A FEW SCROLLS!



FOR YEARS I'VE BEEN ASKING FOR ADDITIONAL
PERSONNEL, BUT NO-ONE LISTENS...



AND THEN THIS IS WHAT THEY GIVE ME, IT'S NOT ENOUGH...

THANK YOU, MRS. BEAUJOT.

MISS, PLEASE!



THEY'VE APPOINTED LEGIONS OF
GEODESIGNERS, BUT NO ANALYSTS.
HOW CAN WE WORK LIKE THIS!?



AND ALL OF A SUDDEN
EVERYTHING'S SO
URGENT. BUT WHY THE
WASTE?



THEY'RE NOT INTERESTED IN GEOGRAPHY.
IT'S ALL ABOUT POLITICS...



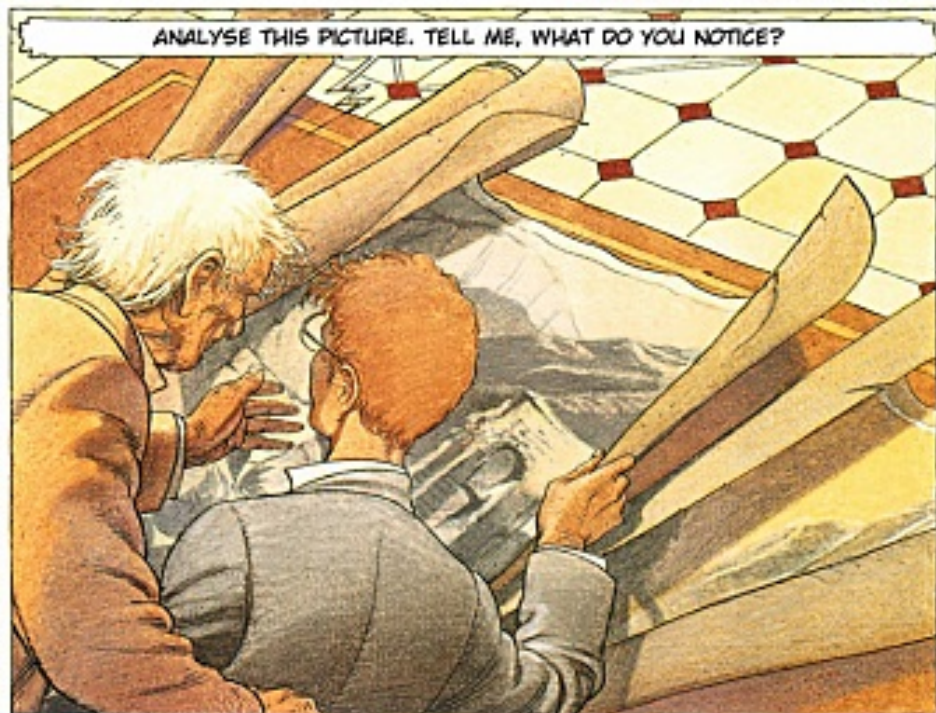
NOW, YOUNG MAN, YOU LOOK A LITTLE
LOST... STOP DAYDREAMING.



METHOD, DASH IT! DIDN'T THEY
TEACH YOU THAT IN RUPELMONDE?

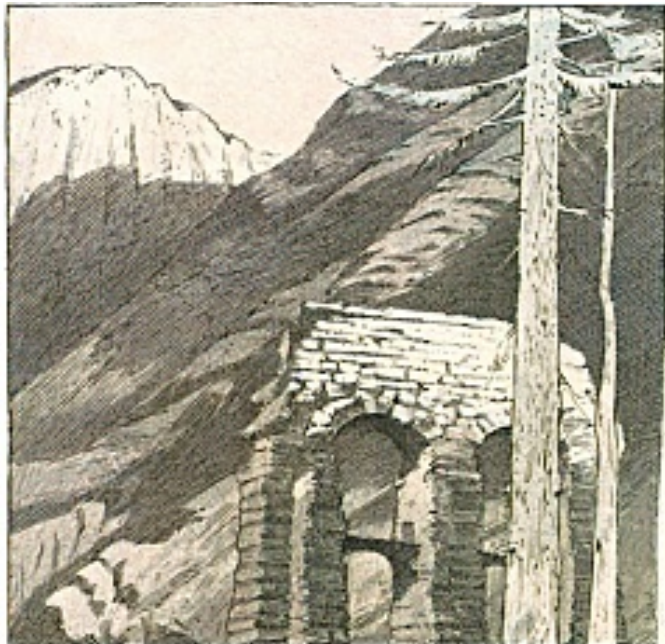


ANALYSE THIS PICTURE. TELL ME, WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?





I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND A THING... WHAT WAS I MEANT TO DO WITH THIS PICTURE? OK, WITH METHOD, AS HE SAID...



SHOULD I RECOGNISE THE STYLE OF THE RUINS? DATE THEIR CONSTRUCTION? ... DETERMINE THEIR LOCATION?



I WOULD SAY LATE ROMAN... BUT I'M A CARTOGRAPHER, NOT AN ART HISTORIAN...



MAYBE HE'S TRYING TO TEST MY GEOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE. BUT I CONFESS, STONES NEVER WERE MY STRONG SUIT.



SO, WHAT DOES IT TELL YOU?

HMM, WELL, FIRST OF ALL, I'LL TRY TO ORIENT MYSELF... LOOKING AT THE SHADOWS, THIS MUST BE THE SOUTHERN FLANK OF A MOUNTAIN RANGE...

BUT MOST IMPORTANT IS THE BUILDING... THE RUINS OF A TEMPLE WITH A MINARET... ERR... A CONSTRUCTION OF...

NO, NO, YOUNG MAN, YOU'VE GRASPED NOTHING... THE FIRST THING TO NOTICE IS THAT THIS IS A VALLEY! THESE HUGE BLOCKS IN THE FOREGROUND CLEARLY FORM A ROAD... A VERY OLD WAY THAT RUNS ALONG THE MOUNTAINS...



WHAT YOU TOOK FOR A TEMPLE, IS AN AQUADUCT, CONSTRUCTED LATER.



HERE YOU SEE THAT WATER CHANNEL AND A LITTLE LOWER, THE ROUTE FOR PEOPLE... SUCH A TREMENDOUS STRUCTURE INDICATES THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ROUTE...



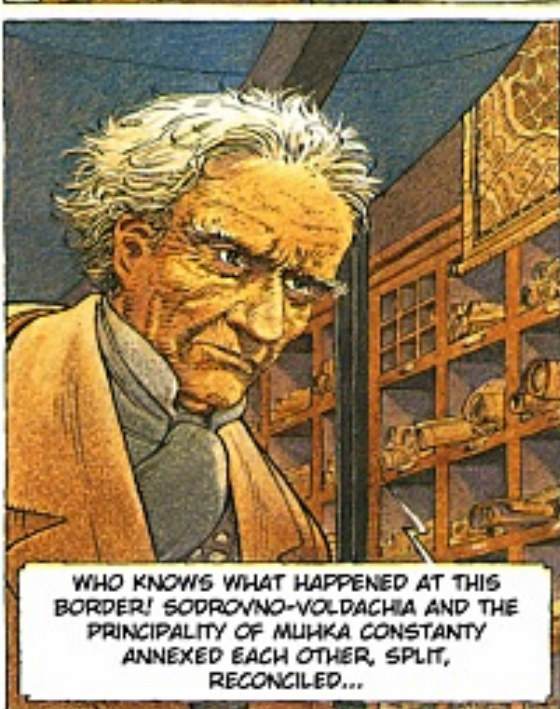
AND NOW, WHY WAS THE AQUADUCT DESTROYED? BECAUSE IT DOESN'T APPEAR TO HAVE COLLAPSED ON ITS OWN... IT MUST HAVE BEEN IN A BATTLE BETWEEN TWO NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES. SO THIS MUST BE A STRATEGIC POINT ON THE BORDER... THAT EXPLAINS THE WATCHTOWER TOO! IT'S FAR OLDER THAN THE AQUADUCT.



AND THOSE PEOPLE IN GALATOGRAĐ SHOULD'N'T FORGET THAT, INSTEAD OF BOTHERING US WITH THEIR GREATER SODROVNIA NONSENSE!



WHO KNOWS WHAT HAPPENED AT THIS BORDER! SODROVNO-VOLDACHIA AND THE PRINCIPALITY OF MUHKA CONSTANTLY ANNEXED EACH OTHER, SPLIT, RECONCILED...



I THOUGHT I WAS A CARTOGRAPHER AND HERE HE WANTED TO MAKE ME INTO A HISTORIAN.

I SUPPOSE YOU CAN ONLY READ MAPS, HMM? THEY DON'T TEACH YOU ANY MORE THAN THAT! BUT MAPS ARE SIMPLY COLLECTIONS OF FACTS THAT ONE MUST KNOW.



OTHERWISE THEY WOULD JUST BE A PIECE OF PAPER WITH NO RELATION TO THE TERRITORY.

HOW BEAUTIFUL!



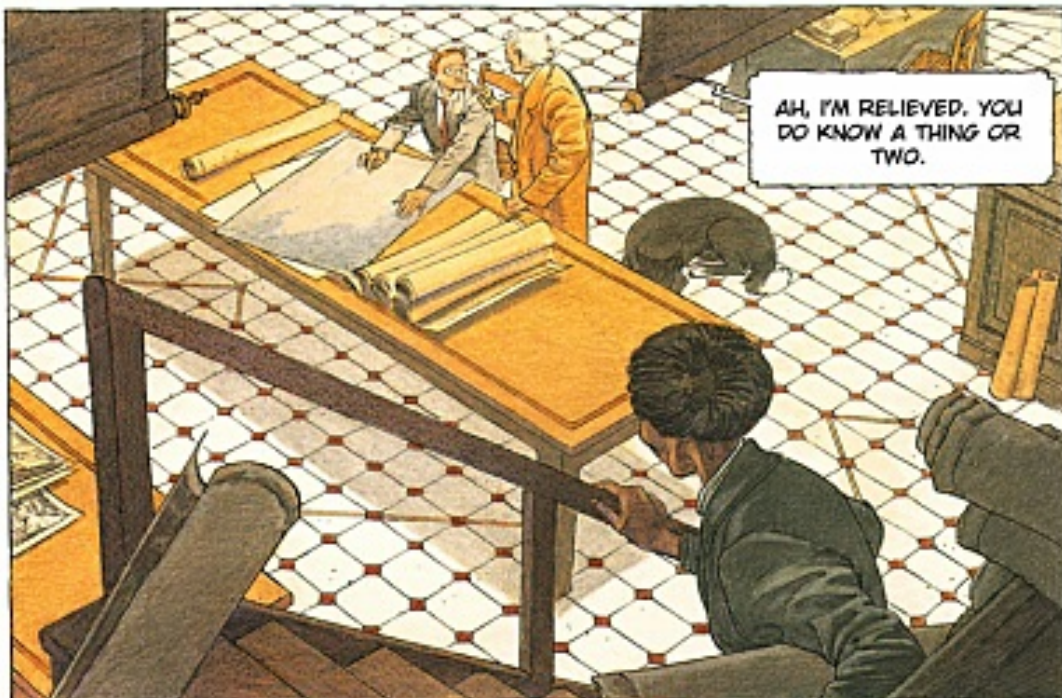
YES, CERTAINLY... NOW TRY TO FIND THE LOCATION OF OUR PICTURE.



FINALLY, A MAP! I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK MASTER PAUL HAD SOMETHING AGAINST THEM.



HMM... I THINK IT MUST BE SOMEWHERE IN THIS REGION... THE WATER WOULD HAVE COME DOWN FROM PORRENTURY AND SUPPLIED THE WHOLE REGION.



AH, I'M RELIEVED. YOU DO KNOW A THING OR TWO.





5 JULY 761. GRADUALLY I GET USED TO MY NEW LIFE. THE SLOW PROGRESS BOTHERS ME THOUGH. AT FIVE O'CLOCK THEY ALL STOP WORKING AND IT'S NOT POSSIBLE TO STAY IN THE OFFICE...



KALIN NEVER LEAVES MY SIDE. IT'S AS IF WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOREVER.



8 JULY 761. I'VE BARELY BEEN HERE A WEEK AND ALREADY SEEM TO BELONG. THE MAPS THAT CONFUSED ME THREE DAYS AGO NOW SEEM CHILDISHLY SIMPLE.



BUT THE FEELING OF BEING LOCKED IN DEPRESSES ME. SOMETIMES I FEEL AS IF I'M GOING TO EXPLODE. THANKFULLY KALIN GIVES ME PLENTY OF EXCUSES TO GO OUTSIDE. HOWEVER, THE CENTRE'S SURROUNDINGS ARE INCREDIBLY BARREN AND DULL.

STILL WORKING? YOU SEEM TO ENJOY IT.



AH, YOU'RE READING
JUTBINA'S TREATISE...
A GREAT WORK JUST
A LITTLE DRY...



THIS ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU
SHOULD THROW OUT. BAD
STYLE AND FULL OF
NATIONALISTIC SLOGANS.

URGH... ARE YOU SURE?

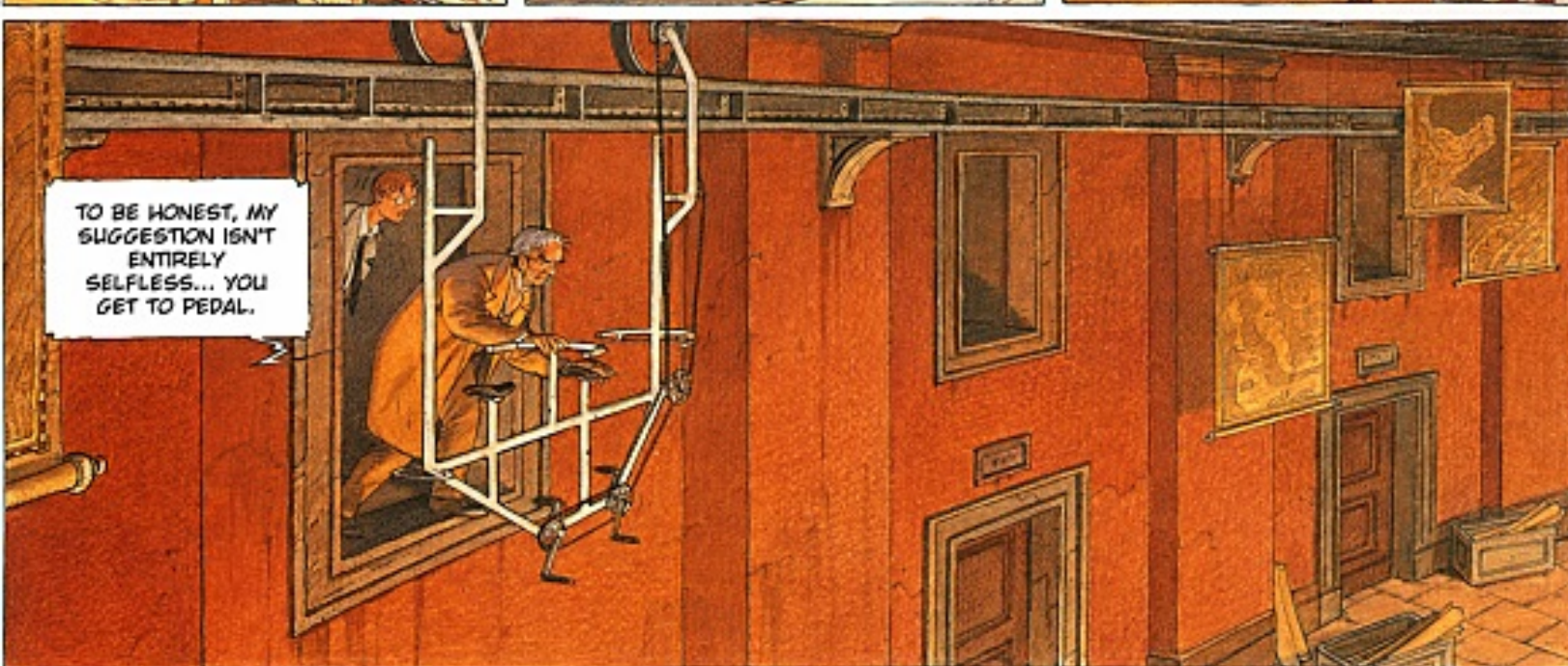


COME WITH ME, I WANT TO SHOW YOU
SOMETHING. SEEING AS YOU'RE THERE AT
THE START, YOU SHOULD KNOW WHAT
IT'S ALL GOOD FOR...

I'LL BE BACK
SOON, KALIN.



TO BE HONEST, MY
SUGGESTION ISN'T
ENTIRELY
SELFLESS... YOU
GET TO PEDAL.



YOUTH MUST BE GOOD FOR SOMETHING,
RIGHT...? YOU HAVE ENERGY...

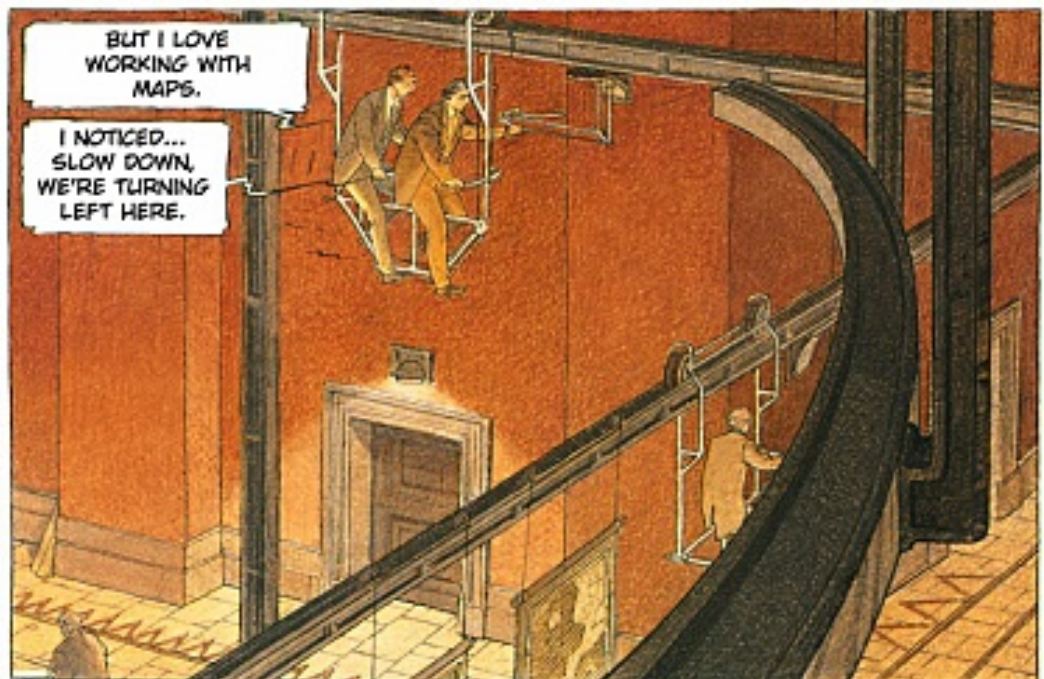


ACTUALLY, A YOUNG MAN SHOULD SEE
THE WORLD RATHER THAN SITTING IN AN
OFFICE. WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE, I WAS
ALWAYS TRAVELLING AS A GEOGRAPHER.

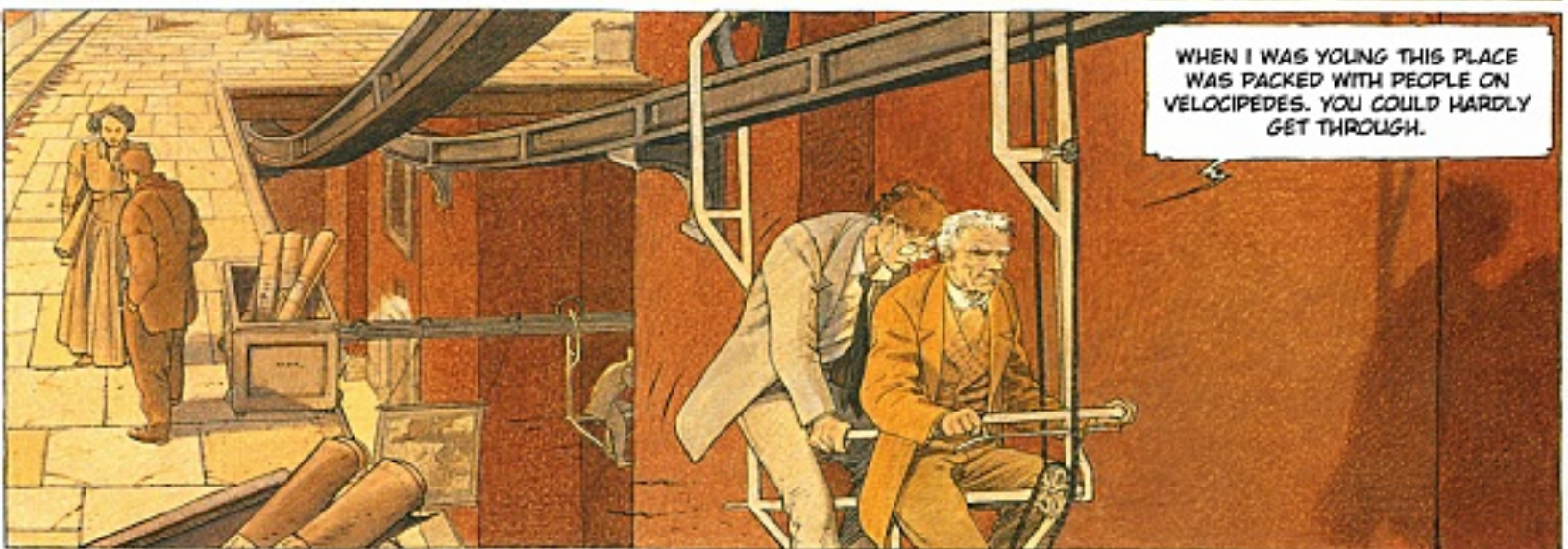


BUT I LOVE
WORKING WITH
MAPS.

I NOTICED...
SLOW DOWN,
WE'RE TURNING
LEFT HERE.



WHEN I WAS YOUNG THIS PLACE
WAS PACKED WITH PEOPLE ON
VELOCIPEDES. YOU COULD HARDLY
GET THROUGH.



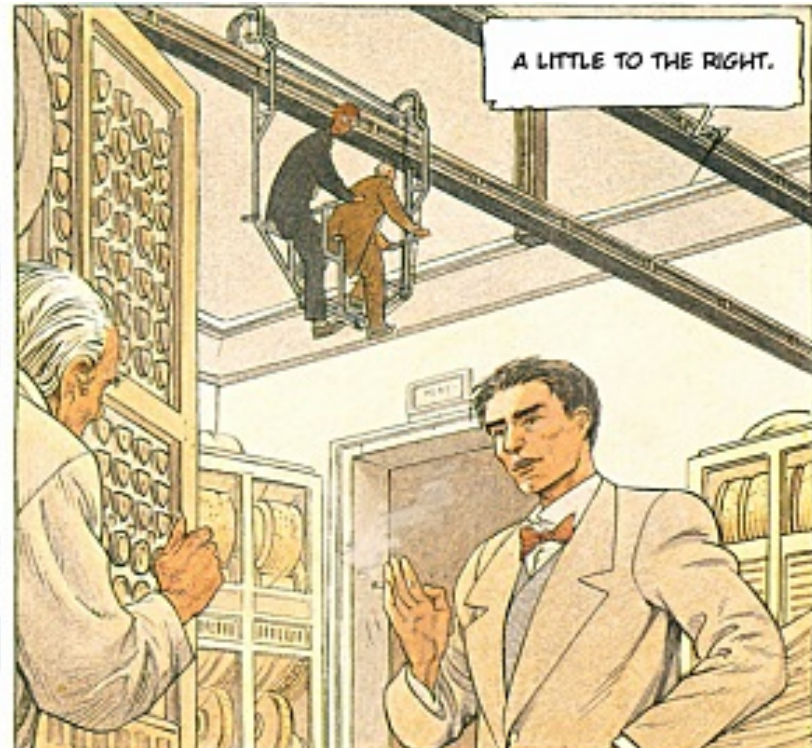
I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE THERE WERE IN THE
CENTRE BACK THEN... AT LEAST TWO, THREE TIMES AS
MANY AS NOW... BUT EVIDENTLY THEY'RE HIRING AGAIN.





THERE, ANOTHER NEW FACE! I SHOULD BE HAPPY, BUT...

CAREFUL, THAT'S FRAGILE!



A LITTLE TO THE RIGHT.



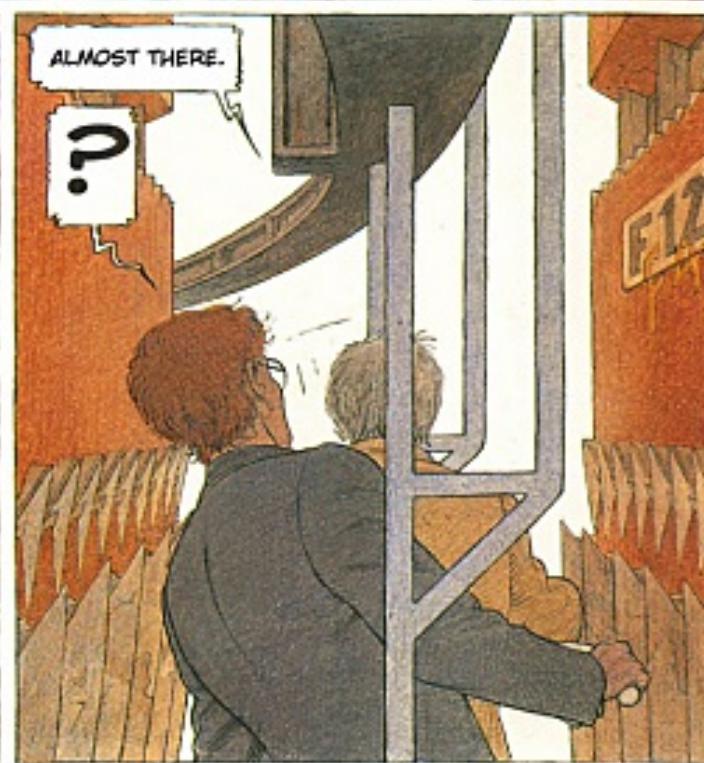
IT'S GOOD THAT SOMETHING'S CHANGING... AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S TAKING AN INTEREST IN THE CENTRE.

MAYBE MY DOUBTS ARE MISPLACED.



WHAT'S IN THERE?

THAT'S RIGHT, YOU HAVEN'T HAD THE PLEASURE... WELL, SOON YOU'LL GET TO KNOW EVERYTHING.

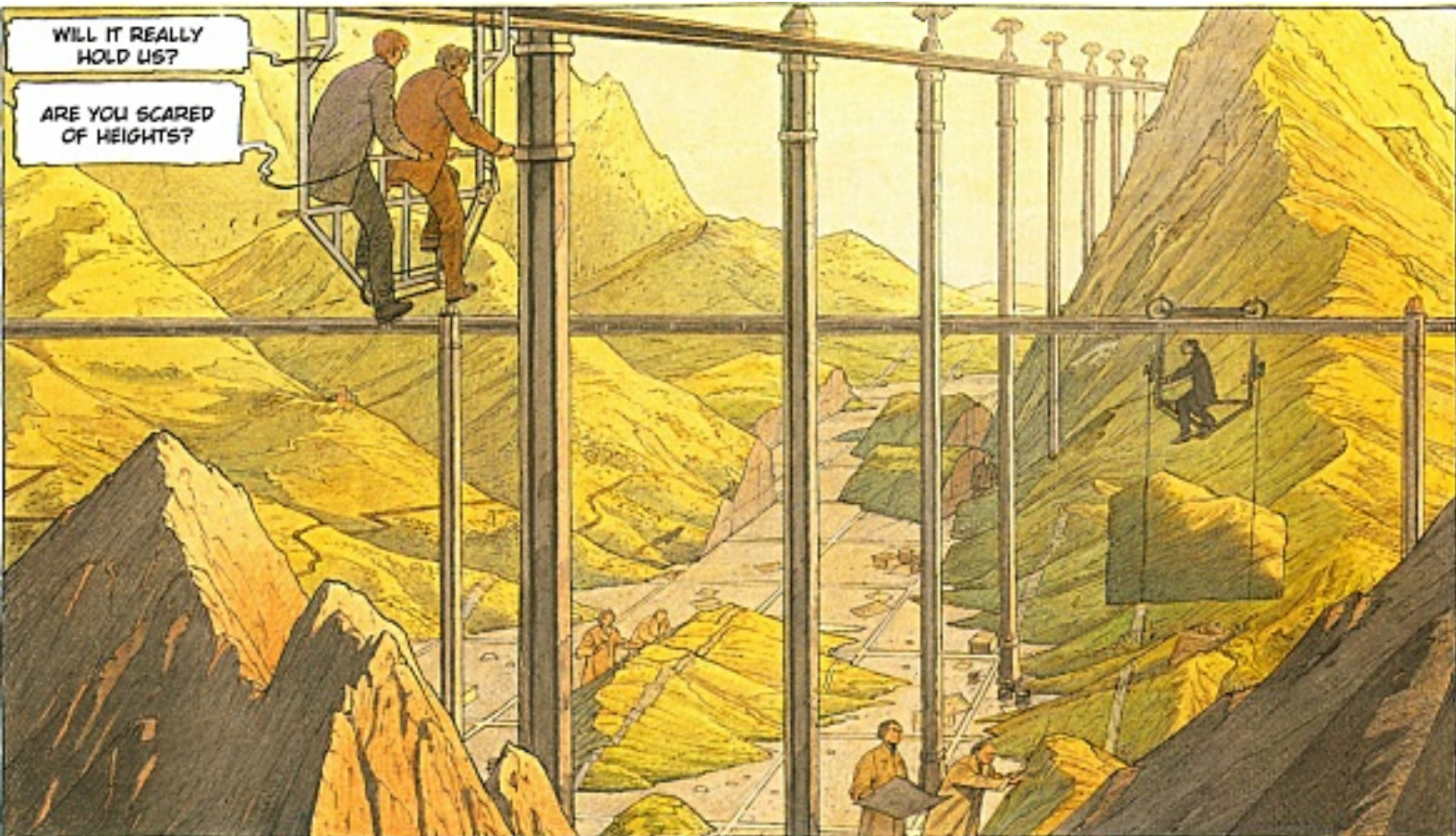


ALMOST THERE.

?

WILL IT REALLY
HOLD US?

ARE YOU SCARED
OF HEIGHTS?



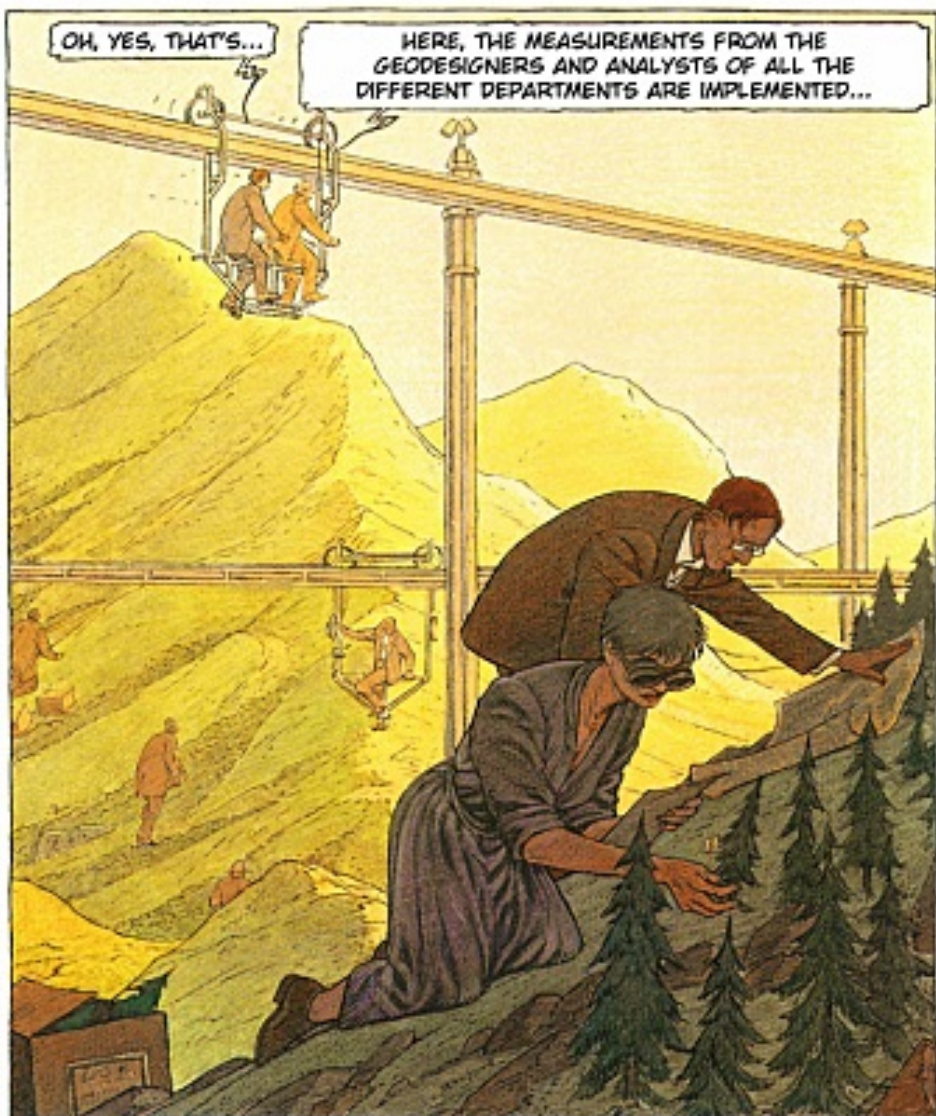
NO, NO, BUT...

AS A LOVER OF
MAPS, THIS
SHOULD
INTEREST YOU...



OH, YES, THAT'S...

HERE, THE MEASUREMENTS FROM THE
GEODESIGNERS AND ANALYSTS OF ALL THE
DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS ARE IMPLEMENTED...



THERE WE HAVE OUR VALLEY FROM BEFORE,
COMPLETE WITH THE OLD AQUADUCT.

UNBELIEVABLE,
SUCH PRECISION...

YOU SEE HOW IMPORTANT MAP INTERPRETATION IS...
WITHOUT DATA NONE OF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!
IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

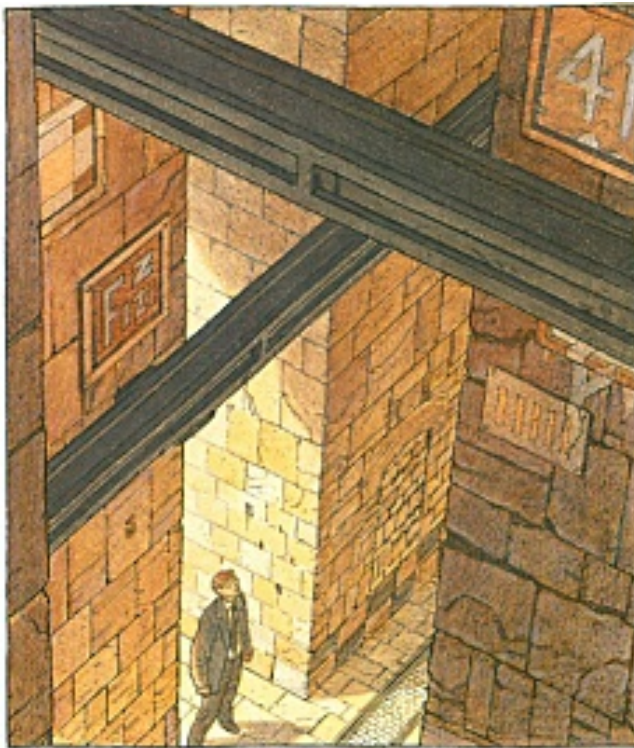
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MASTER PAUL CICERI IS
REQUESTED IMMEDIATELY IN THE
OFFICE OF MASTER NICOLAS.

HOW ODD! WHAT
COULD HE WANT?

SORRY ROLAND, BUT
YOU'LL BE OK HERE,
RIGHT? A BRILLIANT
CARTOGRAPHER LIKE YOU
SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND
HIS WAY NO PROBLEM.

GOD, THIS IS
EXHAUSTING.



I DIDN'T DARE ADMIT THAT I HAD NO SENSE OF DIRECTION...



WELL, WELL, BACK ALREADY?

ERRR... I'M
SORRY... I...



I SAW YOU BEFORE WITH THE OLD GUY...

OH... YES... THE DEVICE...
THAT WAS YOU...

CERTAINLY, THAT
WAS ME...



MY NAME IS DJUNOV, ISMAIL DJUNOV...
I'M A NEO-TECHNOLOGIST AND SPECIAL
ADVISOR TO THE DIRECTOR.

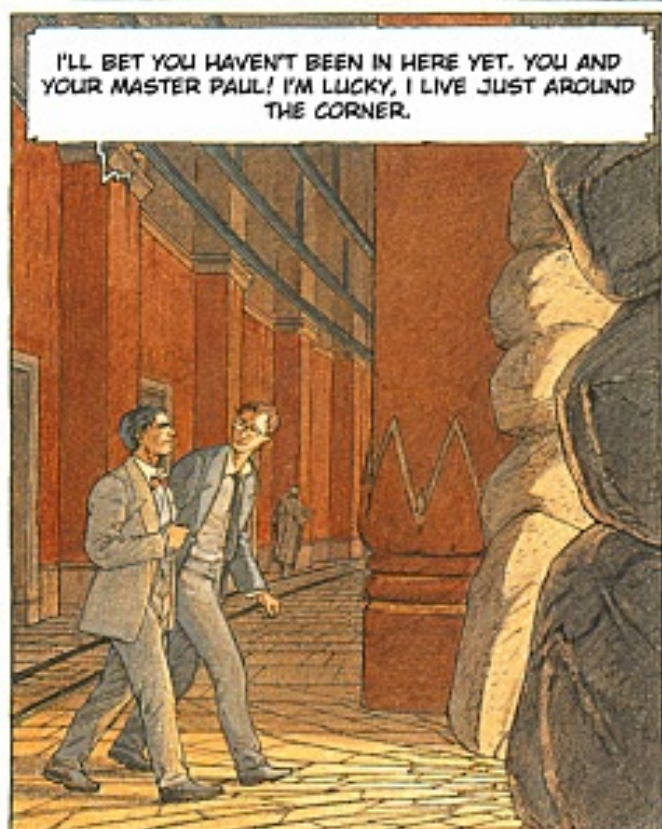
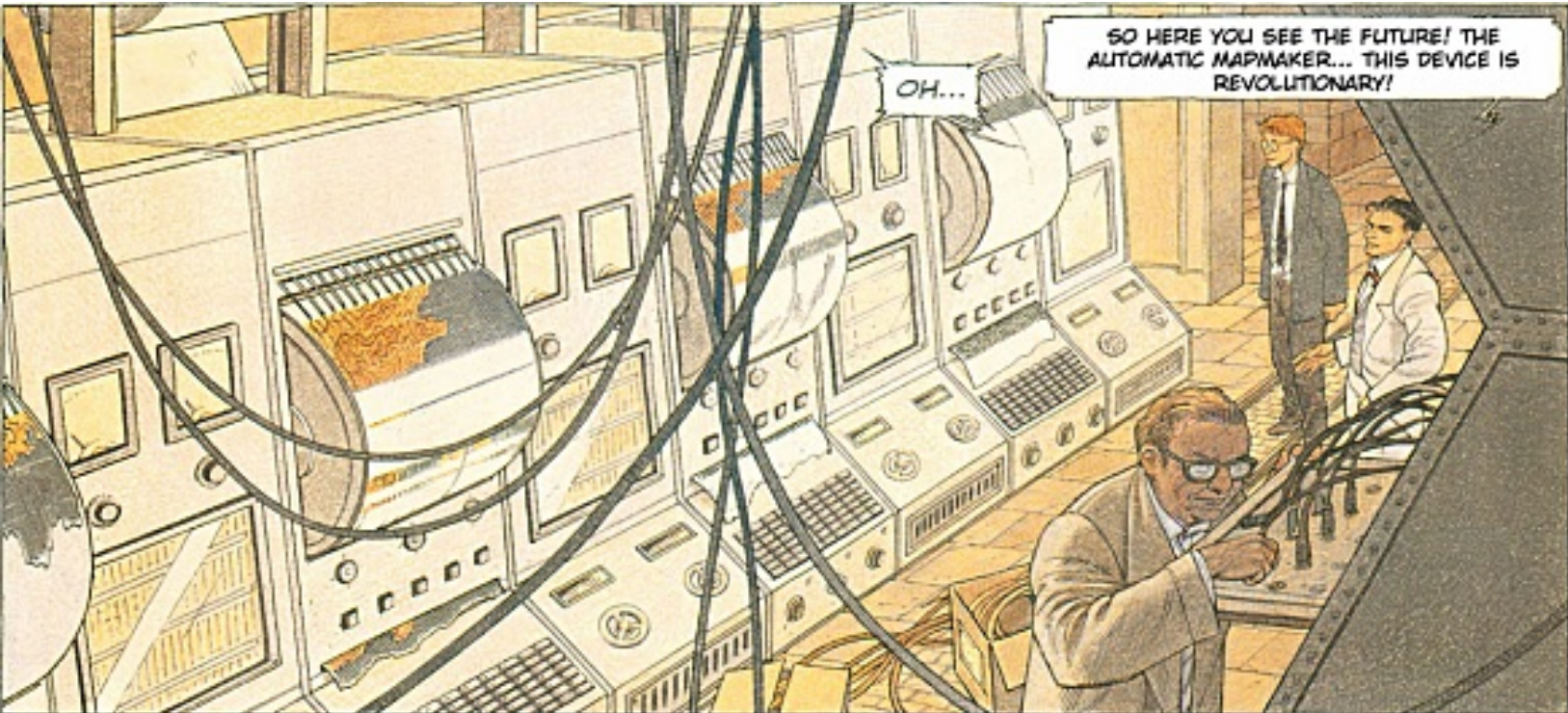
AHA... PLEASSED TO
MEET YOU... I'M...

ROLAND DE CREMER.
I KNOW. I'VE HEARD A
LOT ABOUT YOU.



OH REALLY? WELL...

COME WITH ME, I JUST HAVE TO
SHOW IT TO YOU, THE FABULOUS DEVICE.





I DON'T THINK I QUITE UNDERSTOOD WHAT YOUR... AUTOMATIC MAPMAKER DOES.

IT PROCESSES ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING! FROM THE FIELD DATA TO THE CREATION OF THE MAP.

EVERYTHING IS DONE WITH PUNCH-CARDS. THAT MEANS WE SAVE A HUGE AMOUNT OF TIME.

SARA, TWO SAMARIS PLEASE!



SURE, THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE IN HERE THAT WON'T LIKE IT, BUT THAT'S NOT BY CHANCE! TAKE YOUR MASTER PAUL, FOR EXAMPLE, HE MUST HAVE BEEN HERE FORTY YEARS, AND WHAT HAS HE ACCOMPLISHED? NOTHING!



THAT'S NOT QUITE TRUE. HE'S A LITTLE PECULIAR, YES. BUT HIS INTERPRETATIONS ARE GOOD...

INTERPRETATIONS! ... WE HAVE TO DO AWAY WITH THOSE ONCE AND FOR ALL! IT'S TIME WE GOT OBJECTIVE MEASUREMENTS WITHOUT ALL THESE USELESS INTERMEDIATE STEPS.



THE COUNTRY IS AT A TURNING POINT, MY DEAR FELLOW... THE NEW CHALLENGES WE FACE WON'T FALL FOR ANY MORE CHEAP TRICKS!



WELL THEN... TO YOUR HEALTH!

TO YOURS MAST... ER, ISMAIL!





BLUBB!



ENOUGH DISCUSSION FOR TODAY! WE CAN TALK ABOUT ALL THAT LATER. LOOK AT THOSE TWO, AREN'T THEY PRETTY?... GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT, NO?



WHAT'S WHAT I LOVE ABOUT THIS CLUB, YOU CAN EAT AND DRINK WELL...

SO THEY'RE JUST WAITRESSES?

WE CAN ASK FOR MORE... THINK OF IT AS COMPENSATION FOR BEING STUCK OUT HERE.



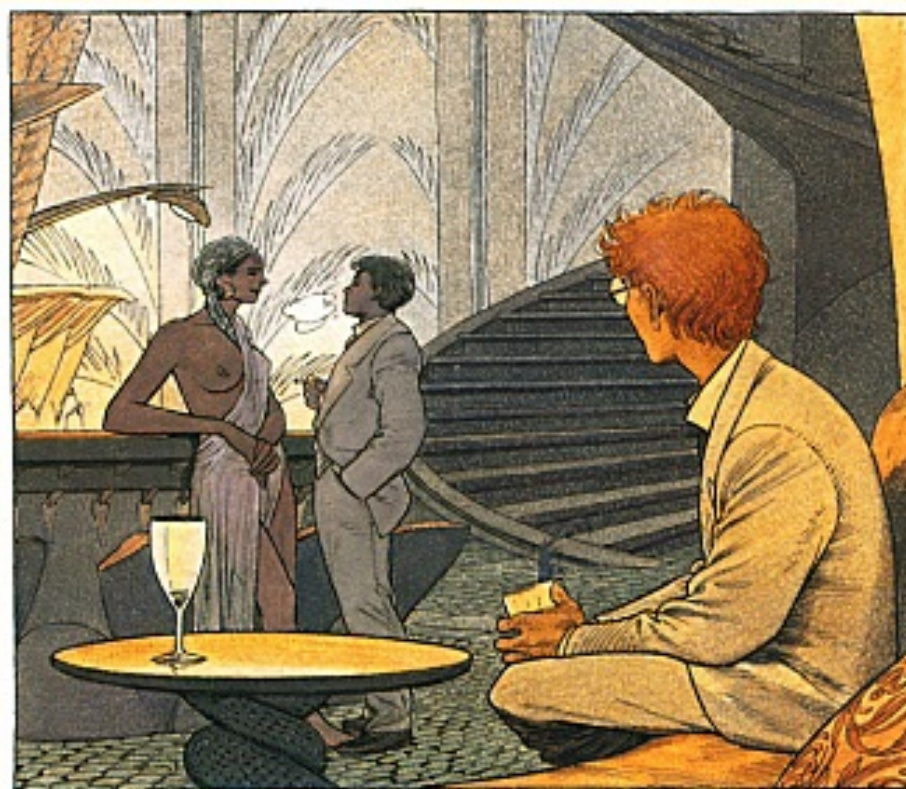
AND HER... IS SHE A...

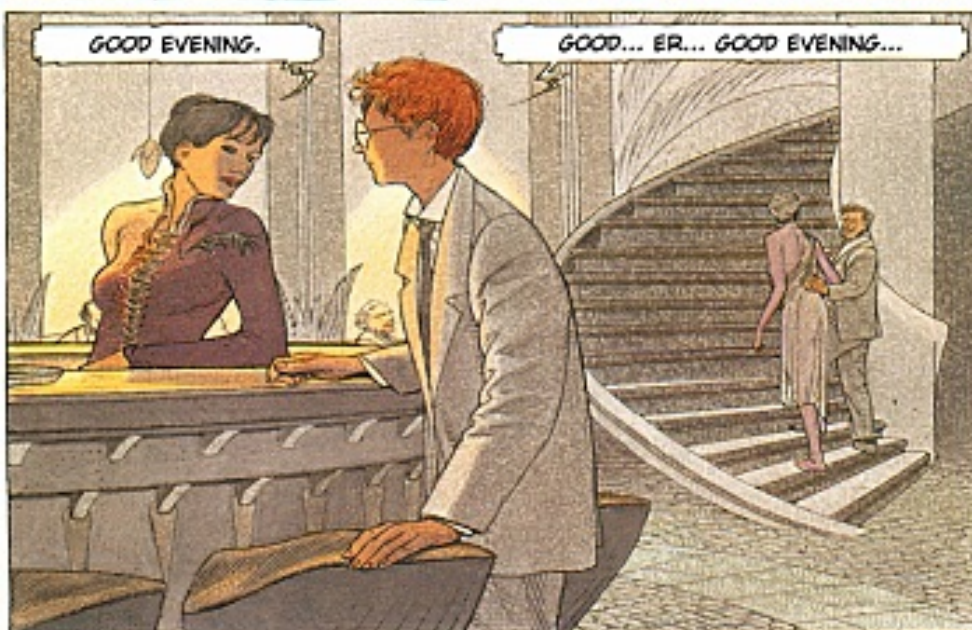
SHE'S A STRANGE ONE. I CAN'T RECOMMEND HER. SHE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO DOESN'T WANT TO UNDRRESS. THAT'S WHY SHE'S RARELY REQUESTED. BUT TO EACH HIS OWN, RIGHT?



I'M GOING NOW. NOT THAT IT WAS BORING, BUT, YOU UNDERSTAND... TIL TOMORROW.

YES, TIL TOMORROW ... AND THANKS...







ONCE AGAIN, I HAD BEHAVED MYSELF LIKE A COMPLETE IDIOT!



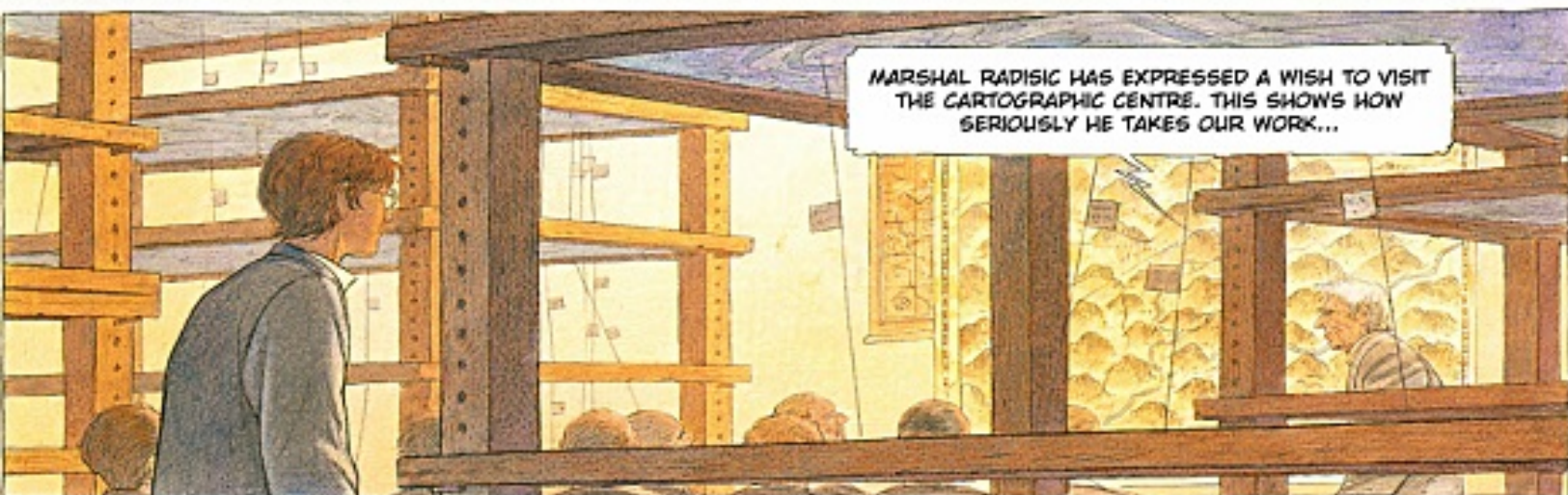
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YESTERDAY THE DIRECTOR INFORMED
ME OF THE IMPORTANT NEWS.



9 JULY 761. I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S UP WITH ME. I OVERSLEPT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A WHILE.



MARSHAL RADISIC HAS EXPRESSED A WISH TO VISIT
THE CARTOGRAPHIC CENTRE. THIS SHOWS HOW
SERIOUSLY HE TAKES OUR WORK...



AH, DE CREMER! WE HADN'T
RECKONED WITH YOU.

I'M SORRY, I...



IN THREE WEEKS, THE MARSHAL WILL
ARRIVE. BY THEN THE MAP MUST BE
MOSTLY COMPLETED. WE'LL NEED THE
SUPPORT OF THE NEW WORKERS THEY
FINALLY SAW FIT TO GRANT US.



MY INSTRUCTIONS SUGGEST THAT THE
STICKING POINT IS DATA PROCESSING.
THUS, ANALYSIS WILL TAKE A BACK SEAT.

LET US LEAVE BEHIND THE MAPS OF DEFEATS,
WILDLIFE AND CULTURES, OF RECORDS OF
LEGENDS AND RELIGIONS. LET US LEAVE
MORE ROOM FOR THE MATERIAL DATA AND
PHYSICAL PHENOMENA!

MANY OF US HAVE WORKED HERE FOR A
LONG TIME, IT'S BECOME A KIND OF
SACRED PLACE FOR US. NOW THEY'RE
INSTALLING NEW MACHINES, APPARENTLY
WITH REVOLUTIONARY FEATURES ...
WELL, WE SHALL SEE.

IN ANY CASE, FROM NOW ON WE SHALL
HAVE TO REFRAIN FROM MAKING COPIOUS
CALCULATIONS AND METHODICALLY
CHECKING EVERYTHING.... EFFICIENCY TAKES
PRIORITY, THEY TOLD ME. WE MUST DELIVER
USABLE RESULTS IMMEDIATELY.

AND NOW... WE WELCOME OUR NEW
COLLEAGUES. TO THE OLD PERSONNEL, I
ASK YOU, JUST AS I MUST, TO CONFROM
TO THE NEW SUIDELINES...

I THANK YOU.

WELL, MY DEAR ROLAND, THIS BEGINS A NEW CHAPTER. FORGET EVERYTHING I TRIED TO TEACH YOU.



I'LL NEVER FORGET...

EVERYTHING THAT WAS IMPORTANT TO ME IS VANISHING...



THE FEEL OF THE LANDSCAPE, THE ATTENTION TO THE SMALLEST DETAILS. EVERYTHING THAT MAKES A MAP INTO THE CONDENSATE OF EVENTS, OF DRAMAS...



HAVE YOU SEEN THE NEW MACHINE? IT REALLY IS IMPRESSIVE.

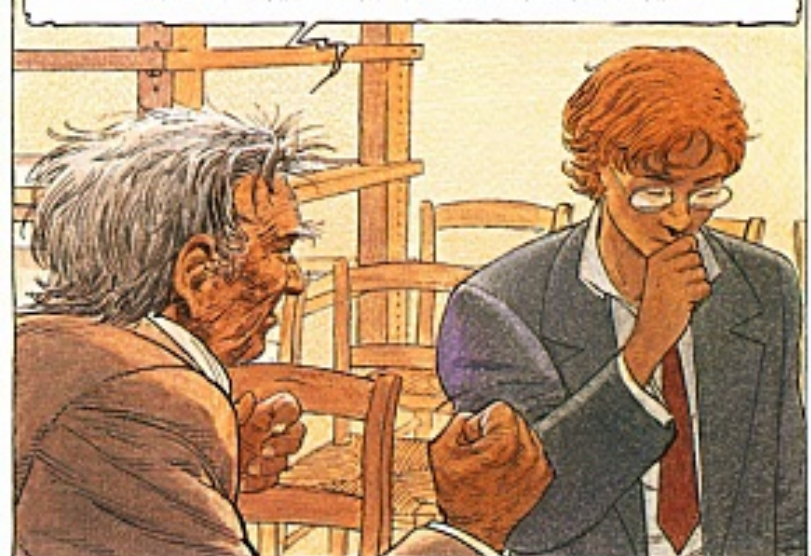


THE... "AUTOMATIC PLOTTER"? THAT "IMPRESSES" YOU?

ER... NOT ESPECIALLY, BUT...



WITH AUTOMATIC DATA YOU CAN DO A WHOLE LOT! BUT THE SOIL CONDITIONS, THE CONTOURS MEAN NOTHING IF YOU DON'T INTERPRET THEM... THERE'S NO "REALITY" IN THEM!





YOU'RE MILES AWAY,
MY DEAR ROLAND.



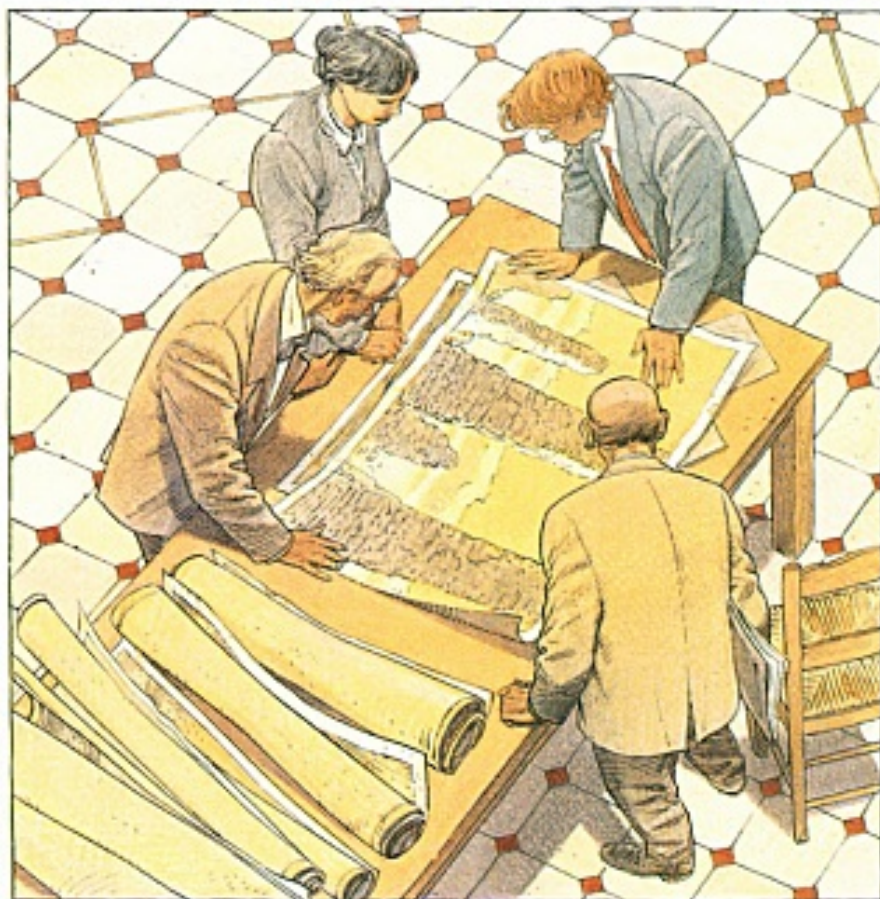
NO, NO ... I JUST SLEPT BADLY.



WELL, ANYWAY, TO WORK! YOU'RE
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NEW ARRIVALS.



THEY DON'T EXACTLY SEEM BRILLIANT,
BUT FOR WHAT'S EXPECTED FROM US,
THAT DOESN'T MATTER.



THE DAY DRAGGED ON ENDLESSLY. THE NEW WORKERS CONSTANTLY HAD QUESTIONS FOR ME,
EACH ONE MORE STUPID THAN THE LAST. IT TOOK AN EFFORT NOT TO LOSE MY TEMPER.











10 JULY



NEXT
PLEASE!

MARSHAL RADISK'S VISIT DRAWS EVER CLOSER. THE STAGING WILL BE GRANDIOSE. AND I GET THE FEELING WE WON'T MAKE IT IN TIME.

12 JULY



EVEN THOUGH I'VE ONLY BEEN HERE A FEW WEEKS, I'M ALREADY ONE OF THE OLD HANDS.
I'M ASKED FOR THOUSANDS OF DETAILS, WHICH I BARELY KNOW TO GIVE.



TIL TOMORROW, SHKODRA.



GOOD EVENING MASTER DE CREMER.

GOOD EVENING...

LAST TIME YOU LEFT
WITHOUT PAYING
YOUR BILL.



YOU DIDN'T THINK SHKODRA'S
SERVICES WERE FREE, DID YOU?
ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU LEAVE
YOURSELF PLENTY OF TIME!

15TH JULY

MASTER PAUL!

EXCUSE ME, HAVE YOU
SEEN MASTER PAUL?

I DON'T KNOW HIM!

A DOG, HERE! ARE YOU MAD?

I WON'T BE HERE LONG... I'M JUST
DELIVERING SOMETHING.

EVERYONE DOES WHATEVER THEY WANT
WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT IT!

YOU'RE JUST STICKING HILLS AND TREES
EVERYWHERE JUST SO THAT THERE'S
SOMETHING THERE!

I THINK IT LOOKS
PRETTY...



AH, YOU'RE JUST IN TIME, ROLAND!
JUST TAKE A LOOK AT THIS MESS!

DON'T GET MAD... NO-ONE PAYS ANY
ATTENTION TO THESE TRIVIALITIES.

BUT THESE AREN'T TRIVIALITIES!



YEARS OF RESEARCH, THOUSANDS
OF BLUEPRINTS, THOROUGH
ANALYSIS - AND THEN THIS!

WATCH YOUR STEP!

I HAVE THE DOCUMENTS
YOU WANTED. IT WASN'T
EASY...



KALIN! NO!

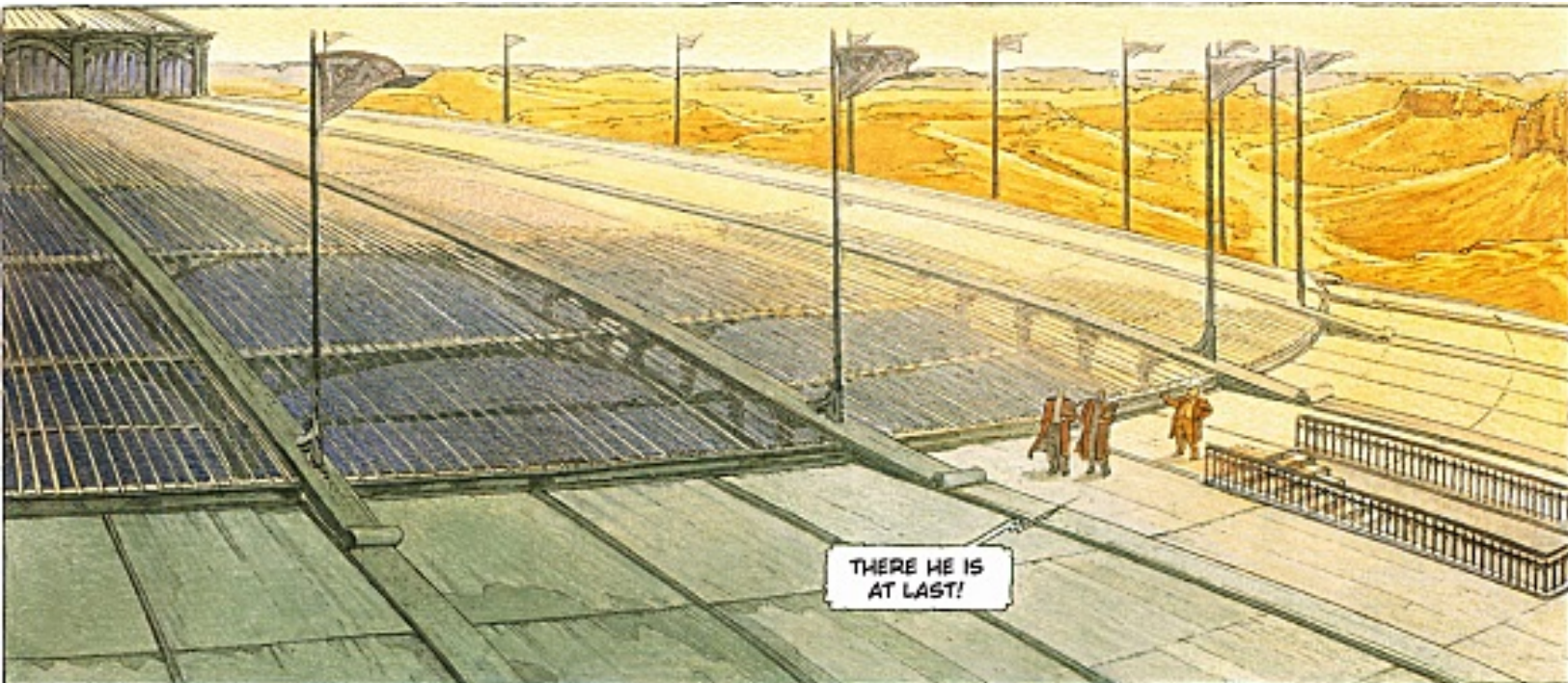


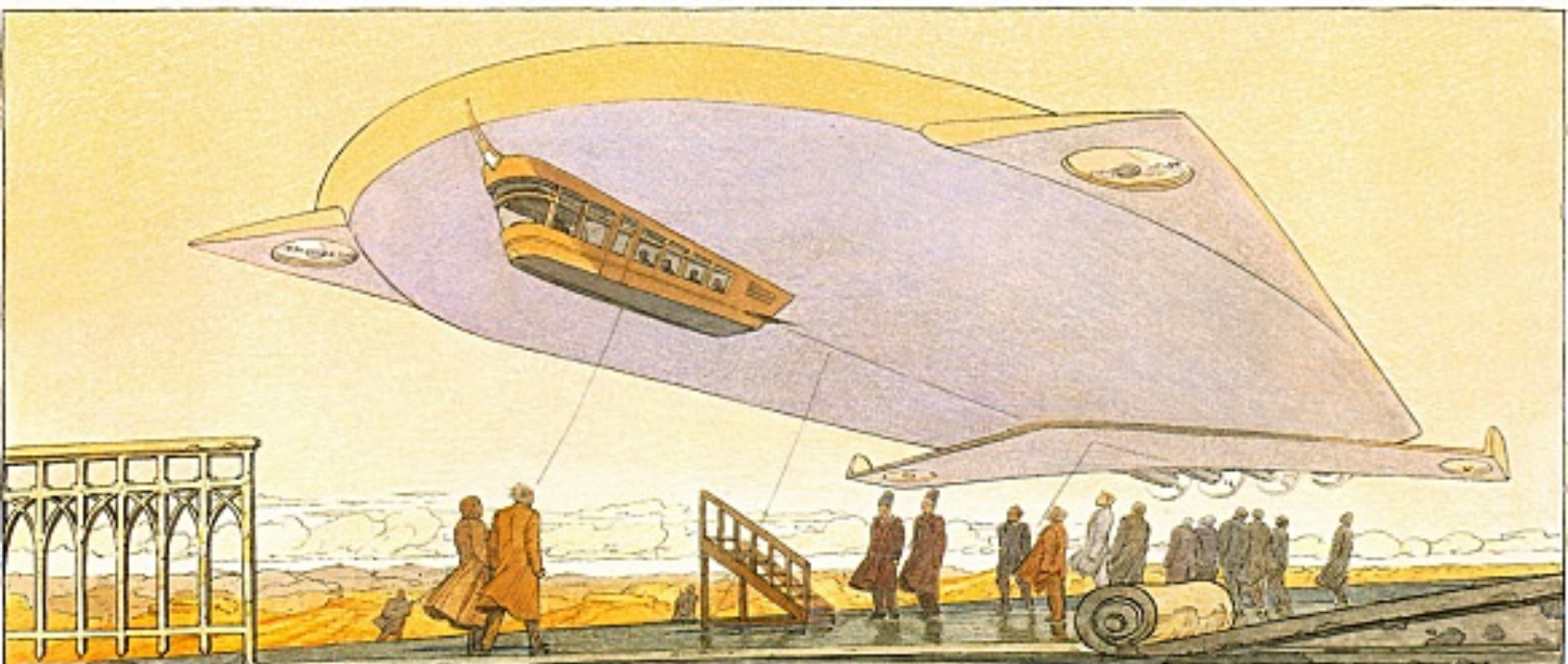
SORRY... ER...
I'LL GO.



WELL, AT LEAST THE DOG THINKS
THE BUSHES ARE REAL!



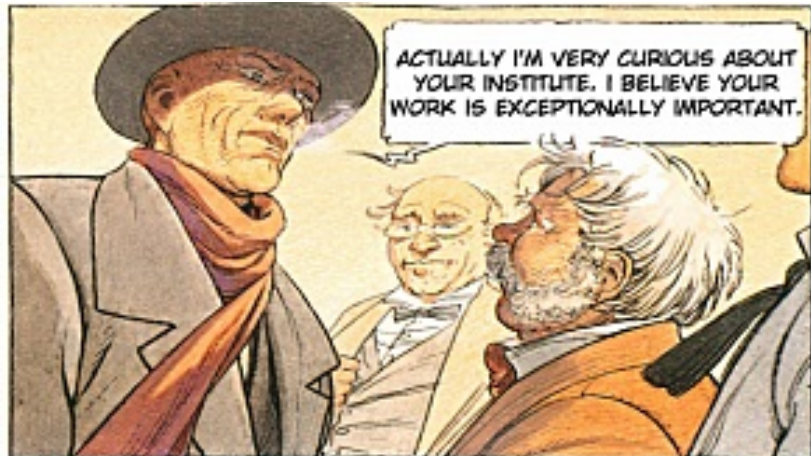




HONOURED MARSHALL, IN THE NAME OF ALL THE PERSONNEL OF THE CARTOGRAPHIC CENTRE, I WISH TO TELL YOU WE ARE GREATLY HONOURED BY YOUR VISIT...



ACTUALLY I'M VERY CURIOUS ABOUT YOUR INSTITUTE. I BELIEVE YOUR WORK IS EXCEPTIONALLY IMPORTANT.



MAY I PRESENT SOME OF OUR TOP MEN, MARSHAL? THIS IS ISMAIL DJUNOV, NEO-TECHNOLOGIST AND MODERNISATION ADVISOR.



WE'VE RECEIVED WONDERFUL NEW MACHINES, MARSHAL...



DE CREMER...

ROLAND DE CREMER, A PROMISING YOUNG CARTOGRAPHER...

MARSHAL!



DE CREMER... A GREAT FAMILY, FIRST-CLASS PEDIGREE...





MAKE YOUR ANCESTORS
PROUD, YOUNG MAN. WE
STILL HAVE PLANS FOR YOU.



ER... THANK YOU
MARSHAL, BUT...

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO
FOLLOW ME? IT'S MORE
COMFORTABLE INSIDE.



WE ONLY USE THIS ENTRANCE
ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS, MARSHAL.



PLEASE EXCUSE ALL THE STAIRS.

NEVER MIND.



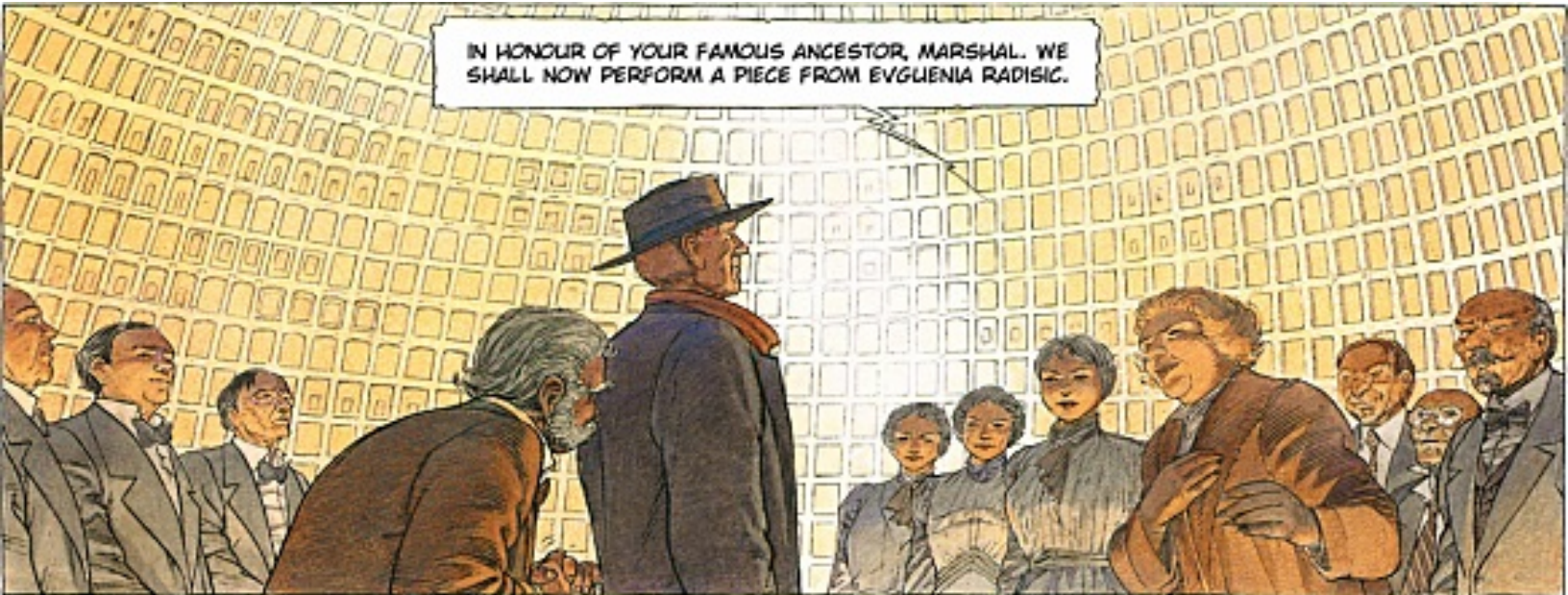
DID YOU COMPLETE
YOUR WORK?



WE PUSHED OURSELVES VERY HARD,
MARSHAL. I THINK YOU'LL BE PLEASED WITH
THE RESULTS...

I HOPE SO.

IN HONOUR OF YOUR FAMOUS ANCESTOR, MARSHAL. WE SHALL NOW PERFORM A PIECE FROM EVGUENIA RADISIC.



GLORIOUS LAND BELOW, SKIES ABOVE,
O NOBLE GEOGRAPHIA,
YOU GAVE US OUR LOVE,
FOR OUR GREAT SODRYOVNIA.



LIKE THE LINES ON A HAND,
AS THE WRINKLES IN A STONE,
ALL THE FRONTIERS OF THE LAND,
ON HER BODY SHALL BE SHOWN.



TREMBLE AND QUAKE IN FEAR,
YOU GODLESS SCUM!
FOR THE INDIGNITIES OF THE YEARS,
VENGEANCE HAS COME!



THANK YOU, MY DEAR COUNTRYMEN! ON THIS GREAT DAY THE FIGHT FOR ZILEHEROUM BEGINS! AND I CAME HERE TO TELL YOU HOW CLOSE TO MY HEART YOUR WORK IS.



THE WORK YOU HAVE BEGUN, THAT YOU HAVE GIVEN AN ENTIRELY NEW DIMENSION, IS, TO MY EYES, FUNDAMENTAL, ABSOLUTELY FUNDAMENTAL!



I COULDN'T HELP BUT LOOK OUT FOR SHKODRA. BUT I DIDN'T SEE HER. PRESUMABLY GIRLS LIKE HER WEREN'T ALLOWED HERE.

THE LONG NEGLECTED TASK OF THE CARTOGRAPHIC CENTRE IS TO DELIVER A SURVEY OF OUR COUNTRY. AT THIS MOMENT THE WORLD IS ON THE CUSP OF A RADICAL CHANGE.



A FEW YEARS AGO URBICAND WAS SWEEPED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH. BRUSEL SANK BENEATH FLOODS AND CALVANI WAS RAVAGED BY STORMS.

EVEN THE PROUD CITY OF PAHRY LOST MUCH OF ITS PRESTIGE AFTER THE FIASCO OF THE INTER-URBAN EXHIBITION.



AND THE CITY OF MYLOS IS ONLY SLOWLY RECOVERING FROM THE LOSS OF KLAUS VON RATHEN AND THE UNEXPECTED RESIGNATION OF HIS DAUGHTER MARY.

WHO COULD THREATEN OUR GREAT
SODROVNO-VOLDACHIA NOW?

WHO, I ASK
YOU? WHO?



AND THEREFORE I HAVE DECIDED TO OPEN THIS INSTITUTE TO
THE PUBLIC. SO THAT EVERYONE WILL KNOW THE
MAGNIFICENCE OF OUR COUNTRY.

OH!

AH!



SOON RAILWAYS WILL LINK THE CENTRE TO GALATOGRAD.

OPEN THE CENTRE TO THE
WORLD? THAT'S CRAZY!



NO-ONE!

THE TIME HAS COME FOR OUR
GLORIOUS FATHERLAND TO
CONSOLIDATE ITS POSITION ON
THE CONTINENT, TO EXPAND
OUR TERRITORY. THUS, WE
MUST KNOW OURSELVES...



SOON... VERY SOON... PEOPLE
WILL COME FROM ALL OVER TO
STUDY OUR ILLUSTRIOUS
HISTORY. AND OUR EVEN
GREATER FUTURE!



CLAP

THANK YOU.

CLAP

CLAP

CLAP

CLAP



AND WHAT DID YOU THINK TO THAT, ROLAND?

AT LEAST HE'S
INTERESTED IN
OUR WORK.

I WISH HE'D LEAVE US ALONE. WHEN
POLITICIANS AND THE MILITARY ARE
INTERESTED IN CARTOGRAPHY, THAT'S
A BAD SIGN...

COME MASTER PAUL, YOU TOO, DE CREMER! WE'LL
ACCOMPANY THE MARSHAL TO THE PARLOR.

A GREAT SPEECH, NO?
FINALLY OUR COUNTRY
HAS A REAL LEADER!

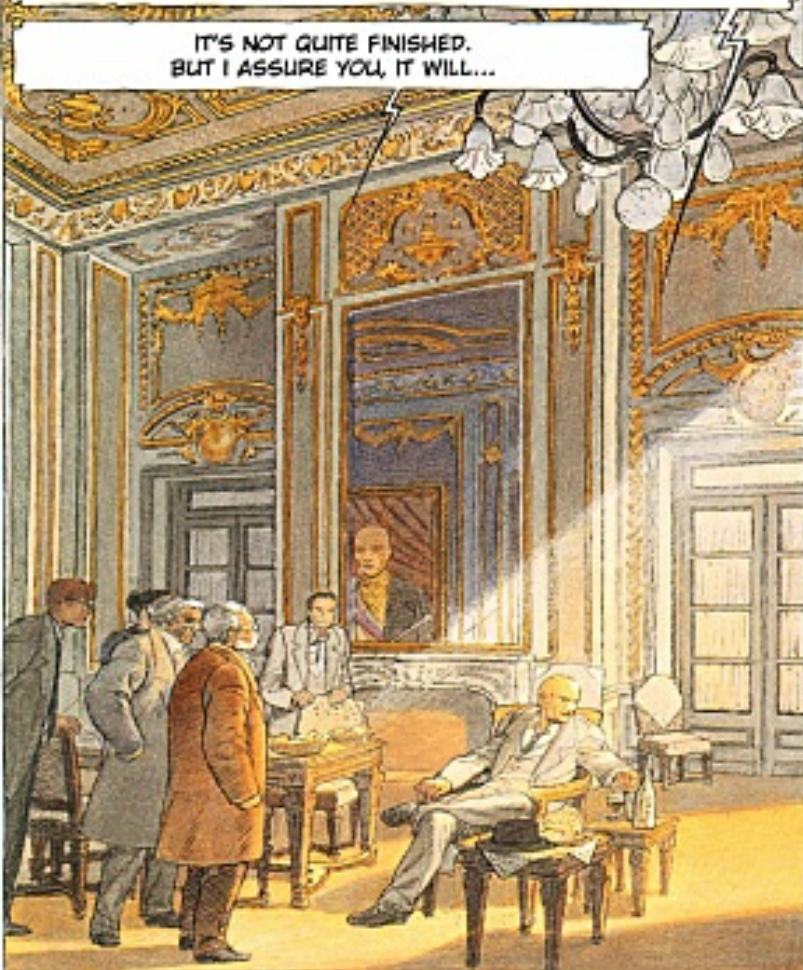
SO, YOU'VE GOT TO KNOW
SHKODRA? WE'RE ALL THE
SAME, MY DEAR ROLAND,
CARTOGRAPHY RIGHT DOWN
TO OUR BONES.

WHICH CAN'T EXACTLY BE
SAID OF OUR INSTITUTE... AH,
THE HELL WITH IT...

I COULDN'T THINK OF AN APPROPRIATE RIPOSTE, BUT MY LOOK SAID
IT ALL. THE THOUGHT THAT SHKODRA... WITH THIS OLD MAN ...

YOUR DESIGN IS VERY PRETTY, BUT NOT YET
CLEAR ENOUGH. NOT GRAND ENOUGH.

IT'S NOT QUITE FINISHED.
BUT I ASSURE YOU, IT WILL...



I'M NOT FINISHED
EITHER!

WE MUST PRESENT GREATER
SODROVNIA IN HER ENTIRETY!
CARTOGRAPHY IS A BRANCH OF
MILITARY ART. ANYTHING MORE IS
JUST FANTASY, WHICH WE MUST
FORSAKE.



IF I MAY MARSHAL, THEY ARE NOT JUST FANTASIES,
BUT HISTORICAL FACTS. THE BORDERS BETWEEN
SODROVNO-VOLDACHIA AND HER NEIGHBOURS ARE
ANYTHING BUT CLEAR... THEY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN
POROUS, THERE WERE ALWAYS MUTUAL INFLUENCES...



MASTER PAUL, I
DON'T KNOW IF...

ROLAND, BRING US THE MAP OF THE
RELIGIONS... AND THE MAP OF WHEAT
AND RICE ... AND BUTTER AND OLIVE OIL!

YOU'LL BE AMAZED, MARSHAL.



I DON'T THINK YOU'VE UNDERSTOOD.



THE MAPS AREN'T IMPORTANT,
JUST WHAT THEY TELL US. I
EXPECT YOU TO PROVIDE ME
WITH IRREFUTABLE ARGUMENTS
FOR MY FIGHT FOR GREATER
SODROVNIA!





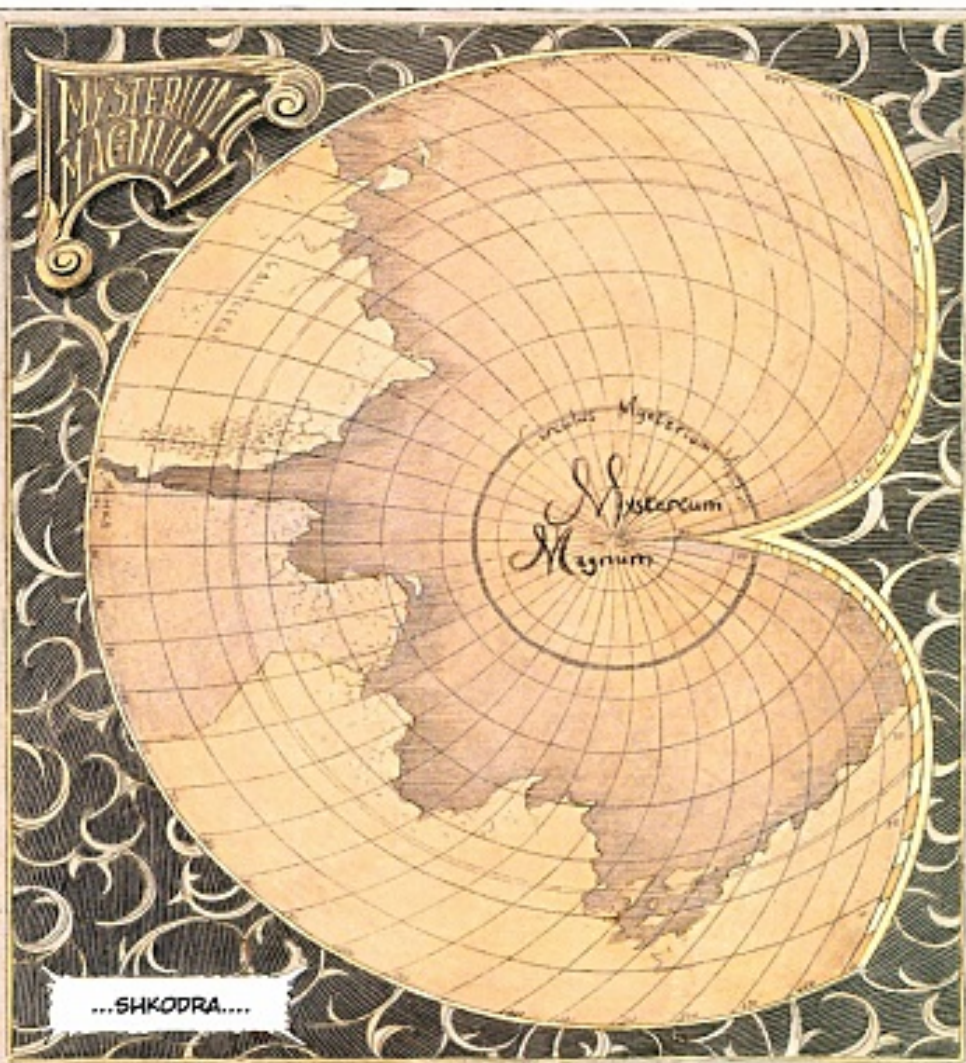
I WAS ONLY TOO HAPPY TO LEAVE THEM... POOR MASTER PAUL DIDN'T EVEN REALISE HE WAS TALKING HIMSELF INTO TROUBLE.



SO, WHAT DID HE WANT? THE MAP OF THE RELIGIONS... THE MAP OF WHEAT...



WHAT, THAT'S UNBELIEVABLE... IT LOOKS JUST LIKE...



...SHKODRA...



HAVE YOU GOT IT? I NEED QUICK RESULTS. THE PUBLIC WILL GET ACCESS SOON. WE MUST MAKE THEM UNDERSTAND. I WANT THEIR PATRIOTIC ZEAL!

WE'LL DO OUR BEST, MARSHAL!

I ASKED MYSELF HOW THEY WOULD REACT... WAS IT POSSIBLE THAT MASTER PAUL HAD NEVER SEEN THE MAP?



BIT BY BIT THE PIECES CAME TOGETHER IN MY HEAD...
THE SCARS ON SHKODRA'S SKIN... THE BORDER THAT
WAS SO IMPORTANT TO THE MARSHAL...



GENTLEMEN, A NEW CHAPTER IS
OPENING IN OUR HISTORY...

IT'S ABOUT TIME!



I DIDN'T REGRET HAVING MISSED THE DEPARTURE. WHO KNOWS WHAT THE FUTURE WILL BRING? FOR THE TIME BEING IT WOULD BE BETTER IF NO-ONE SAW THIS MAP...

